

REMARKS

By the foregoing amendments, Applicants have revised independent claims 1 and 22 to eliminate redundancy and generally improve their wording. They have additionally made numerous changes in the dependent claims 2-6, 14-21, 23-42, 44, 46-49, and 57-60 to improve their wording and make certain of them more accurate. For example, the new wording of claims 2 and 23 sets forth more accurately the relationship between the profile collection and operations recited in those claims. And claims 22-42 now recite the medium as being “processor-readable” rather than “processor-executable,” because what the processor really executes is the instructions that the medium contains, not the medium itself. After these amendments, claims 1-64 remain pending in the application.

Applicants’ independent claim 1 is directed to a method of pro-actively refreshing credentials by an entity that maintains credentials. Among other things, the subject matter of Applicants’ independent claim 1 includes using related information stored with respective credentials as the basis for determining which credentials should be refreshed in a pro-active refreshing operation.

In the Office action, the Examiner has rejected claim 1 and other claims as defining subject matter anticipated by the contents of U.S. Patent No. 6,216,231 to Stubblebine, stating that “‘231 teaches a protocols [*sic*] and policy for specifying constraints in a distributed system, having: a refreshing credentials entity, a memory, a profile collection, related information, examining a refresh policy, replacing a credentials, updating the profile,

and repeating the actions, storing a credential identifier, when credential issued, recent use, older time/expired, recency requirements, and use for subsequent sessions.”

Applicants respectfully request the Examiner reconsider this rejection, because the '231 patent does not teach the subject matter that Applicants' independent claim 1 defines. A system employing pro-active refreshing can refresh the credentials when, say, it is idle or not experiencing a heavy processing load, so subsequent attempts to access secured resources will tend to experience fewer delays, because credentials tend to be up to date when the access attempt is made. Without more, though, pro-active refreshing could prove excessively burdensome, and the invention addresses that problem. In accordance with the invention, the credentials are stored in respective credential profiles with related information, such as freshness constraints, and the method includes, for each profile, “making a determination, from that credential profile's related information, of whether that credential needs to be refreshed.” So, even though the system is refreshing pro-actively, it does so selectively and can thereby therefore restrict refreshing to credentials for which doing so is most beneficial.

It is true that the '231 patent describes a method by which credentials can be refreshed. Its approach is to refresh credentials either at specific intervals or on demand ('231 col. 5, ll. 60-62). At least in the specific cases in which it mentions refreshing the credentials in response to changes in policy ('231 col. 11, ll. 47-57, col. 12, ll. 36-39) or in response to requests for access to a secured resource ('231 col. 11, ll. 27-30, col. 12, ll. 64-67, col. 13 ll. 1-2), it is not clear that the refreshing occurs pro-actively. Even if it does,

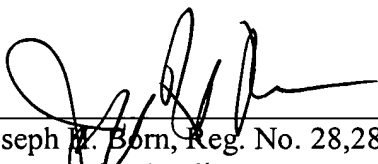
though, the '231 patent's method does not, as Applicants' claimed approach does, base a determination of whether to refresh each credentials on related information stored with that credential. In the '231 patent's arrangement, information stored in the credentials is used to determine whether to grant or deny access to resources, not to determine which credentials to refresh. Consequently, the '231 patent's system does not provide the benefit of refreshing credentials pro-actively in a way that enables the system to avoid unnecessary computational burden.

The other independent claims, namely, claims 22 and 43, similarly distinguish their subject matter from the prior art. Claim 22 is directed to a storage medium whose contents configure a processor to perform claim 1's method, and claim 43 defines an apparatus that similarly stores with the credential related information that it uses to determine whether to refresh that credential. So all of the independent claims define patentable subject matter, as do the dependent claims, at least by virtue of their dependence on those independent claims.

Applicants therefore request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw his rejections.

Respectfully submitted,

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